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CARILLONS

M. BARTLEET.

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CARILLONS

BY

M. BARTLEET

AUTHOR OF
"MINIATURES IN FRENCH FRAMES"

With a Prefatory Note by

EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.

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PREFATORY NOTE

FIFTY years ago, our young poets, obeying an impulse which was oddly simultaneous, set themselves to the cultivation of what were called " the forms," that is to say precise patterns of verse, of ancient and mainly French invention, in which certain rules of recurrence of rhyme and exact number and distribution of lines had to be rigorously followed. Swinburne wrote sestinas; Austin Dobson and Andrew Lang wrote ballades; Henley and R. L. Stevenson wrote villanelles and rondeaux; I was proud of contributing the earliest chant royal. Our elders observed the movement with indulgent curiosity. Leslie Stephen commissioned me to contribute to the *Cornhill Magazine* a detailed account of the regulations and the modern instances; this appeared in 1874, and was referred to as a *vade mecum* for versemen. Finally, the late Mr. Gleeson White gathered our slender harvest in a sheaf of " Ballades and Rondeaux," which extended to all the exotic " forms," and may still be referred to with pleasure. Then the interest in these delicate forms of versification flagged, and they almost ceased to be employed for serious poetry, though they have never lost credit with the satirist and the humorous troubadour.

In 1920 Miss M. Bartleet published a little volume called " Miniatures in French Frames " (Elkin Mathews), in which she displayed a proficiency and a pertinacity which were remarkable. These are qualities needed to overcome the difficulties of the " forms," where the skilful tortoise has more chance of success than the volatile hare. Miss Bartleet

showed herself daunted by none of the regulations. She wrote rondeaux—and rondeaux redoublés, which is much more of a feat. She wrote villanelles, a whole dozen of them; sestinas, pantoums and triolets, all conforming themselves with exactitude to the laws laid down by Théodore de Banville in his "Petit Traité de Poésie Française." She was, if I may venture on a distinction, particularly fortunate in her ballades, of which I should like to quote here at least one specimen. That, however, is unnecessary, because in the little volume now before the reader Miss Bartleet again essays the ballade, with her old intrepidity. Moreover, on this occasion she attacks the chant royal, which is the most alarming of all the "forms," and, as it seems to me, with real success.

The cultivation of the "forms" half a century ago was undertaken in reaction against loose and undisciplined technique. When the history of poetry in the nineteenth century comes to be written, there will be room for mention in it of the effort made by an active and enthusiastic group to obey a set of laws, bequeathed by the French poets of the fourteenth century, which were arbitrary in themselves, but the very formalism and vigour of which were of use in tightening the girths of Pegasus. I wonder if some of the unbuttoned bards of the present moment, "so lax in their garters, laxer in their gait," might not recover tone by being forced to write exactly correct rondeaux and ballades for a month or two?

EDMUND GOSSE.

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Carillons

CAME THE PRINCE

(*Chant Royal*)

THERE was a Spell o'er the entrancing place
Where Spring delayed, to woo in vain the eye ;
Therein no creature that could aught deface,
No churlish breezes turned a leaf awry ;
The very birds so softly learned to sing,
So gentle made the beating of their wing,
It seemed as if there sounded and recurred
The echo only of a singing-bird ;
The sun durst scarce intrude with eager beam
So jealously the woods this pleasance gird ;
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

As hushed the Palace, not a foot might pace
Its pictured galleries, its salons high ;
No voice disturbed its calm from roof to base,
Its doors set wide for any passer-by—
But none there passed, the lackey or the King,
For all within were deeply slumbering.

The King slept sound ere hunting, ready spurred ;
The stately Queen, in mantle minevered,
Amidst her sleeping ladies slept supreme ;
Slept the Court Fool in attitude absurd :
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

Below, the Cook slept, pounding lard and mace,
His saucepan ready with the carp to fry ;
The roving Page might not his steps retrace
But slept, for pillow, on a cake long dry !
Couched at the well, with water jug to bring,
A sleeping foot-boy clutched the bucket-string ;
The dairymaids slept by their milk and curd,
The sleeping seamstress held the ruff half shirred,
The coachman snored, and dozed the horses cream,
Nor could the dog have barked, the cat have purred ;
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

While, on a heath-fringed plat, by kinder grace
Allowed a fairer rest, a softer sigh,
Her rosewood couch bespread with lawn and lace,
With swansdown lined, silk-shaded from the sky,
The *Princess* slept—in an unchanging Spring
Rich with laburnum gold, and gold of ling ;
So flowerlike she, so lovely, so unstirred,
The butterflies aroving often erred
Assured her lips with honeyed favours teem,—
She neither moved, nor welcomed, nor demurred—
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

She sleeps !— A footstep ardent as in chase !
A youth strides here new magic to apply ;
He doffs his jewelled cap for an embrace,
Her lips he kisses, loverlike yet shy.
She stirs—her drowsy eyelids fain would cling ;
She wakes—she wonders why the joybells ring ;
The sleeping Beauty wakes—the Realm has heard !
Against the Prince's breast, without a word,
She leans, half-smiles, half-tears, in April stream ;
His kiss the Spell has broken like a sherd ;
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

Envoy

Still honey-sweet, still fragrant, still unblurred,
Prince Debonair, the bounty then conferred ;
Romance still lives its promise to redeem,
The Counter-charm still potent is averred :
Such is the Law of the Enchanted Dream.

OF GREAT POSSESSIONS

(*Chant Royal*)

SALVERS and golden plates, a gleaming band
Embossed and chased in order for review ;
Great silver jugs and burnished flagons stand
With silver basins filled with scented dew ;
Crystal carafes, glass goblets bubble-slight,
Venetian bowls of iridescent light,
Dishes of porcelain large and small in size,
With painted flowers and fruit to appetize ;
Tall candelabra with outspreading wings,
Caskets inlaid with jewelled dragon-flies :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

Napkins of linen, woven strand by strand,
Damask and velvet hangings, mats to strew,
Carpets from Persia, silks from Samarkand,
Satins and tapestries of mellow hue ;
Sable-lined cloaks and ermine capes snow-white ;
Soft swansdown cushions for the day and night ;
Rich purple cloth from vats of Tyrian dyes,
Rose-point and needle-lace that women prize ;
Fine, priceless shawls (that draw through finger-rings)
Embroidered with an hundred peacock's eyes :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

Crowns, diadems, and bracelets diamond-spanned,
  Aquamarine and sapphire's varying blue,
Ear-rings and anklets set with moonstone bland,
  Gemmed orbs and sceptres, lying two by two ;
Opals whose lambent depths are furnace-bright,
Beryl and onyx and the chrysolite,
  Turquoise as gentle as the summer skies,
  Imperial jade that Easterns idolize,
Large orient pearls in creamy shimmering strings,
Corals and cameo-shells the sea supplies :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

Statues and friezes by a master-hand ;
  Paintings for which the nations met to sue ;
Armour that journeyed to the Holy Land,
  Swords, daggers, lances, tempered and steel-true,
Heirlooms that prince to prince bequeaths aright ;
Garlands of wooden flowers that scorn time's flight ;
  Books of all ages in whatever guise,
  Emblazoned scrolls of wisdom for the wise ;
Lutes, viols, dulcimers, whence music springs,
  The harp that chants, the trumpet that outcries :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

Castles and houses that a genius planned,
  Palaces reared of marble, old and new ;
Chests, tables—mirrors for a queen's command ;
  Antlers and skins of beasts that monarchs slew,
Huge ivory tusks engraved with deeds of might,
Panels of ebon, tiles of malachite ;

Gardens outspread to ravish and surprise,
Ferns, orchids, won by globe-wide merchandise,
Gilt cages where each rarest song-bird sings ;
Horses and coaches,—all that man descries :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

ENVOY

Princes and Lords, all fails at your demise,
Low lie your heads as any vassal lies ;
When to the catafalque the mourner brings
A nation's tears, a nation's heart-wrung sighs :—
These are the glory and the pomp of Kings.

MARIE OF SCOTLAND

(*Chant Royal*)

THERE were no lips so summer-sweet as thine,
No eyes so sad with wonderment of tears,
Marie, the Goddess-Queen whom men enshrine
By heartfelt worship for three hundred years.
Wast thou more dear, more wondrous, long ago,
Secure in sceptred rule, or when brought low ?
In the full ears of wheat or in the lean ?
Both thou hast known, both Prince and beggar been;
At thee her divers shafts has Fortune aimed ;
For thee both South wind soft and North wind keen—
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

Fate chose for thee a three-fold thread to twine
Before 'twas cut, too early, with the shears ;
A strand as red as blood or ruby wine,
Steel-bright the second, as the points of spears,
The third of gold, the royal crown to show ;
Yet, hadst thou known thy friend, or feared thy foe,
Stooped from thy peak to scan the deep ravine,
But gauged aright thy haughty rival's spleen,
Thy chequered years had been more fitly framed.
Success and failure aye thou liv'st between,
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

From first to last thy vassals, line on line,
Lived to adore thee, Queen of hopes and fears ;
Once thou wast theirs and now to-day art mine,
Thy champion I, before all eyes and ears ;
Thy gage I wear, to carry to and fro
That all men knowing me my Lady know—
Her beauty such as ne'er before was seen,

Her sorrows greater than a throne could screen—
My Lady hotly praised and hotly blamed ;
Who oft could harvest love and oft must glean,
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

Like thunder-clouds thy deepening woes combine,
And none can aid thee, and no hope encheers
Thy day with promise that the sun shall shine
And double brightness shall repay arrears ;
And all thy future meet thee in a glow
With glory, love and honours to bestow,
And all thy past depart and leave serene
The page unblotted and the mirror clean.
Thine image should be perfect and not maimed,
Bright-plumaged bird made in the sun to preen,
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

Not long thy ways are splendid and benign,
To stormy seas thy bark for ever steers ;
Didst thy fair youth for pleasant France repine
When the bleak North possessed thee midst its peers?
To darker scenes thy passing pageants go,
And thou must take thy part for weal or woe ;
No more the lustrous bird—the peregrine
Straight from the kill with beak encarnadine—
Haste, haste, the hood, else is thy memory shamed !
Still keep, unchanged, thy gentler vision's sheen,
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

ENVOY

Brood on proud Eyes, of stern unconquered mien ;
Still light, sad Star, the strange and haunted scene ;
Remain, veiled Soul, to charm whenever named ;
Rose of Romance, Marie, the Scottish Queen,
Shining and shadowed, honoured and defamed.

PERSEPHONE

(*A Winter Chant Royal*)

A MAIDEN treads on Enna's flower-pricked mead
Sweet with spring fragrance, tuneful with a rill,
And other maidens follow in her lead
Their osier baskets eagerly to fill ;
They quest, they find, they gather far and near
The daffodils each with its leafy spear.
Bright as the promise of the first spring ray
Persephone, and sweet as dawn of day ;
Demeter's daughter, child of Cornfields, she ;
Not long the mother bade her darling stay :—
" Return to me, my Love, Persephone."

But lo ! the sky grows dark. (Heed, maidens, heed !)
The wind has ceased to chant, the brook to trill ;
The lightning flashes ; but with swifter steed,
More thunderous crash, comes a more potent will:
What chariot is this that scatters fear,
With night-black horses ? Who the charioteer ?
He nears the maids. He strides amidst their play.
He sees Persephone in sweet array :—
" Fair daughter of Demeter come with me."
(In vain, afar, the waiting heart shall say :—
" Return to me, my Love, Persephone.")

She cannot speak. She trembles like a reed ;
The flowers heaped in her tunic overspill ;
She stoops to gather them with anxious speed,
She clasps the violet and the daffodil.
Fair flower, fair face, that has not known a tear,
Your Fate, half glory and half gloom, is here.
The Dark King takes her hand—she must obey ;

His night-black horses bear her far away
Deep in the Nether Realms his Queen to be—
But in her heart shall echo day by day :—
" Return to me, my Love, Persephone."

Demeter wanders, frantic in her need ;
" Persephone," she pleads on vale and hill ;
" Persephone, return. Art gone indeed,
My Love, Persephone ? " but all is still.
She blights the fruitful seasons of the year,
The Spring lies withered and the Summer sere
Wanting Persephone : " The fruit, the spray,
The fertile fields shall languish and decay ;
No sun shall warm, no rain refresh the lea
While still to find my heart's delight I stray.
Return to me, my Love, Persephone."

Pale Queen of Hades, she has come half freed,
Again the year with hard-won joy to fill ;
But she has tasted the pomegranate-seed,
The Dark King gained her heart and holds it still.
Again she treads Sicilian meadows dear,
Persephone, and sees the flowers appear.
Her kisses soon Demeter's grief allay ;
Not long must she in those fond arms delay.
Her kingdom calls ; she bends to the decree :
She will return, nor say her mother nay—
" Return to me, my Love, Persephone."

ENVOY

Demeter, Goddess, to whose vital sway
The fruitful lands raise an eternal lay,
Long, long, has winter sealed the herb and tree ;
Blend thou with ours a puissant voice to pray :—
" Return to me, my Love, Persephone."

THE FOOTPRINTS OF PAN

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

SOFT as a flute the welcome of the breeze ;
Here did Pan pass, here pressed the springing sod ;
Sweet as a flute the throstles in the trees
Bore witness to the presence of a God.

Here did he pass. The wind remembers still ;
Strange thrills aroused the shepherds on the leas ;
A laughing ripple ran along the rill ;
Soft as a flute the welcome of the breeze.

These are his footprints. Winter held the year,
And grey the boughs and brown each sterile clod ;
But flowers and grass in his bright steps appear—
Here did Pan pass, here pressed the springing sod.

Here sat he on a primrose bank, and played
His magic syrinx for the world's surcease,
And taught the forest songsters till he made
Sweet as a flute the throstles in the trees.

Then went his way, the buds, the herbs bereft,
That bloomed and flourished at his smile or nod ;
But Spring had come. The legacy Pan left
Bore witness to the presence of a God.

And still betimes Pan takes his woodland way,
There plays his pipe, and charms the sleeping year ;
There, loth to leave, his melodies delay—
If any listen, echoes they may hear
Soft as a flute.

ANEMONES (WIND-FLOWERS)

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

THE wind-flowers fall, and spread their pleading leaves
As red as blood, the brightest and the best—
Great Goddess, who for young Adonis grieves,
Thy swan-drawn chariot stoop that they be blest.

Remorseless Fates, for punishment or boon
None make ye swerve, or he himself deceives!
By thy decree Adonis died too soon.
(The wind-flowers fall and spread their pleading leaves.)

The flower-starred meads burn crimson in the sun,
Flame sanguine as Apollo hastens West;
An hour they glow (ere yet their day be done)
As red as blood the brightest and the best.

From Cyprus speed! At Zephyrus' stormy breath
The wind-flowers fall. O charge that he reprieves
Their little lives from this too early death;
Great goddess who for young Adonis grieves!

Yet, if by these bright flowers so quickly sped
The hour of thy young lover be expressed,
If every petal be a drop he shed
Thy swan-drawn chariot stoop that they be blest.

She comes, she comes! While over mead and hill
The twilight waits, her chariot cleaves the skies;
A rain divine the trees, the grasses, thrill
As, blest by tears from Aphrodite's eyes,
The wind-flowers fall.

PHAETHON

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

THE Palace of the Sun stood reared in air
Whence bright Apollo drove his daily course ;
His crown of Rays no rival strives to wear,
Of fire his Chariot, and a flame each horse.

The earth-born son his Father's love would claim—
Thus Phaethon climbed the Glory's jewelled stair,
And heard Apollo call him by his name :—
(The Palace of the Sun stood reared in air.)

" To drive thy Car my ardent spirit waits.
This boon, my Father, for thy love's long loss ! "
Thy Day-star paled, and dim the Eastern Gates
Whence bright Apollo drove his daily course !

" How grant thy boon ? A mortal dare to ask
What Gods must dread ! Rash boy, thy fault repair ;
Apollo scarce performs his awful task,
His crown of Rays no rival strives to wear."

Yet yields the Sire ! The stripling holds the reins ;
He drives the Car divine with mortal force ;
The rampant horses snort and toss their manes ;
Of fire his Chariot, and a flame each horse.

The earth, the waters, smoke ; the goal is far ;
Far is the Chariot hurled in ways unknown ;
And Phaethon falls, a fiery shooting star,
And wan the God, and echoing moan on moan
The Palace of the Sun.

NARCISSUS

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

O ECHO-HAUNTED flower by pool forlorn,
That sprang to birth where dead Narcissus lay ;
Who bore him hence ? To silence art thou sworn ?
Wilt thou not say ? Fond Echo answers : " Aye."

How oft his mirrored likeness with delight
Narcissus scanned, when rose each dewy morn ;
Love's sentinel, like thee, by day and night,
O Echo-haunted flower by pool forlorn !

How drear, how dwindled, grew the form and face
That gazed into the silver pool each day !
White as the blooms that marked his resting-place,
That sprang to birth where dead Narcissus lay.

No cenotaph did skill of man devise ;
No tomb to shield the lovely flesh outworn ;
The Gods alone know where Narcissus lies—
Who bore him hence ? To silence art thou sworn ?

Betimes a word is breathed, if in despair
The Seeker summons Echo to obey :
" Canst thou not guess ? " " Yes," shivers through the air.
" Wilt thou not say ? " Fond Echo answers : " Aye."

" Deceiving Echo, yet thou lov'st him most."
From sounding cave, deep vale, and mountain brow,
Borne on the wind comes Echo's murmur : " Lost."
None, none can answer, neither she nor thou,
O Echo-haunted flower.

CUPID, THE RESTLESS CHILD

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

CUPID, the restless Child, flies here and there,
His bow in hand, his arrow at the string ;
He seeks and finds his victims anywhere ;
He aims and hits and laughingly takes wing.

None are too old or sage to feel secure ;
None too remote, he guesses their repair ;
He spies the gay, the silent, the demure.
Cupid, the restless Child, flies here and there.

Beware, O maiden, wandering in the field,
Ye careless couples out to dance and sing ;
Cupid is on the watch altho' concealed,
His bow in hand, his arrow on the string.

Unruly mortals, peevish and malign,
Vow that such wounds as his they cannot bear ;
In vain the safe seclusion they design
He seeks and finds his victims anywhere.

Wiser the man and maid who bear the smart
And heal the tiny wound with kiss and ring ;
For soon or late will Cupid touch each heart—
He aims and hits and laughingly takes wing.

And yet men love his charming, vexing wiles,
His sparkling eyes, his freakish, pleasing mirth ;
His near approach they greet with becks and smiles—
Who is most prized, who were most missed on earth ?
Cupid, the restless Child.

THE WEB

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

FATE weaves her web. The like a mortal dared
When, with Minerva once, Arachne wrought ;
The Goddess and the woman contest shared,
But art divine makes mortal skill of nought.

They watch with careful eyes the warp and woof,
By skilful hands each web is well prepared ;
Adroit as they, remorseless and aloof,
Fate weaves her web ; the like a mortal dared.

The webs are wove. Upon the even threads
A thousand hues their busy needles brought,
Rich iris mauves, sun yellows, and fruit reds,
When, with Minerva once, Arachne wrought.

The Goddess showed her Olive ; (which, perforce,
Secured her Athens ;) Stitched the maid, unscared,
Europa in her terror and remorse !
The Goddess and the woman contest shared.

At last complete the wondrous craft of each ;
Arachne's gaze her rival's canvas sought,
Her rage, her envy, were too great for speech,
But art divine makes mortal skill of nought.

Rent, rent, her web, and broke the skilful loom.
Her penance death ? Alas ! a worse remains—
A spider she, a spider's web her doom—
Aloof, untouched by penalties or gains
Fate weaves ***her*** web !

HIPPOMENES AND ATALANTA

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

" HEAR ! Aphrodite, hear ! Propitious be !
Wing thou my feet that I the maid outpace ! "
The Goddess plucked three apples from the tree :
" Heed thou my words and thou shalt win thy race."

He saw the maid outrun the strong, the fleet ;
Who lost, he knew, must bear death's penalty ;
" By Love," he swore, he would the maid defeat :
" Hear ! Aphrodite, hear ! Propitious be ! "

" I bring thee cygnets, and I bring thee doves,
With rose and myrtle deck thine altar-place ;
Goddess of Love, who promptest human loves,
Wing thou my feet that I the maid outpace ! "

The Goddess brooded in her shrine apart—
A youth too brave, too fair to die was he ;
Not loth, she knew was Atalanta's heart—
The Goddess plucked three apples from the tree.

" Should she outstrip, an apple leaves thy hand,
The maid will pause to seize its golden grace ;
Then speed thine utmost o'er the level sand—
Heed thou my words, and thou shalt win thy race."

Unhelped how had Hippomenes endured ?
Three times he ran in danger of his life ;
Three times to pause was Atalanta lured :
" By *thee* I reach the goal and win my wife,
" Hear, Aphrodite ! "

THE STATUE OF MEMNON

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

AURORA'S tears as Dew the Gods devise
While sculptured Memnon sits, a vocal Woe,
And turns towards the Dawn unseeing eyes
And wails as wails an harp-string, strange and low.

In noble strife is slain Aurora's Son ;
(The Oracle forebodingly replies.)
O'er-matched has Memnon lost, Achilles won.
(Aurora's tears as Dew the Gods devise.)

The Winds, his brothers, hold his obsequies ;
They build his tomb, the pyre to flames they blow ;
To Thebes they waft perpetual sympathies
While sculptured Memnon sits, a vocal Woe.

The stricken Mother's grief no prayer abates ;
Distraught and pale, from land to land she flies ;
Calm, calm as Death the giant Statue waits
And turns towards the Dawn unseeing eyes.

Yet when she stoops, uncomforted and fond ;
Yet when those stony Feet her tears bestrow
The quickened Lips in agony respond
And wail as wails an harp-string, strange and low.

Still does the Goddess-Mother rove forlorn ;
The ages pass, and still the Son adored
Lives in his Statue sacred to the Morn ;
And Dewdrops glisten still on many a sward—
Aurora's tears.

THE BEE

(*Rondeau*)

CUPID, on incessant wing,
Once a treasure trove must bring
For his mother's glance to share ;
See the heedless urchin bear
In his hand the wondrous thing !

" Cupid, wherefore let it cling ?
In the air the insect fling.
Soon 'twill prick you ; ah ! beware,
Cupid ! "

Smarting Love kind arms enring ;
Venus soothes him, murmuring :
" Cease, sweet son, this vain despair ;
Soon the wound I will repair ;
Think, henceforth, how arrows sting,
Cupid ! "

A MINIATURE

(*Rondeau*)

A MINIATURE framed in an antique square
Of silver-gilt, whose graven corners bear
The crest and motto of a noble line ;
The pictured face is masterful and fine ;
White is the mantle, and the powdered hair.

A manly face intent to do and dare ;
The mouth withholds a jest it fain would share ;
The sea-blue eyes look laughingly in mine—
A miniature.

The artist, sure, possessed a spirit rare
To use such gifts, such ideals to declare ;
In him perception, wit, and taste combine ;
How delicate the skilful hand to sign :
" (*N*)athaniel (*D*)ixon," in the corner there—
A miniature.

THE SATIN CASE

(*Rondeau*)

A SCENTED Case of satin, rose and gold
And silver-clasped ; just big enough to fold
Twelve fragile *mouchoirs* in a band of rose,
(Fit to be pressed against a dainty nose !)
A *dentelle* border delicate and old.

This was my gift to Her that held enrolled
A love that worshipped mute and humble-souled.
My Rose delights in fragrance, so I chose
A scent.

Then, at the last, my hopes became more bold ;
My deep devotion stumblingly I told,
And in the Birthday Case the note enclose—
And now I wait and tremble and " Suppose " !
Here comes *her* note ; I wonder can it hold
Assent ?

A SONG OF HOPE

(*Rondeau*)

HERE in a book I come to lie
A song of *Hope, assured and nigh ;*
And soon some Reader, hard to cheer,
Will hear me with his inward ear
And feel consoled, and wonder why.

And I shall hasten to reply
With eager pride : O, it is I
Who sing of *Hope, serene and clear,*
Here !

But many hearts will pass me by
And never hear or even try ;
So mute to such I must appear,
A " nonsense-verse," a thing to jeer :
Yet I shall sing for smile or sigh—
Hear !

A NOISE

(*Rondeau*)

A NOISE an ecstasy, a dream can be
When perfect voices out-pour harmony ;
A whispering brook can lend a soft delight,
The songs of larks in their up-winging flight,
The breeze intones a subtle melody.

Or grander strains when cyclones rack the sea,
When thunder's chords re-echo o'er the lea—
A syllable to solace or affright,
A noise !

A hurdy-gurdy grinding hideously,
Discordant tales of " he and she and me,"
A banging door, windows not fitting tight,
A shrieking cowl, new shoes, a mouse at night,
The school slate-pencil scrawling A.B.C.
Annoys !

"*SWEET*"

(*Rondeau*)

SWEET are the early voices when birds greet
The waking nests, and fly the morn to meet,
And trill their joy for the new-shining day;
And sweet is children's merriment at play
In the wide meadow or the narrow street.

Sweet are the gallant sounds of drums that beat,
Of bugles' invitation and repeat;
Of martial songs that ardent pulses sway—
Sweet.

And sweet the organ's murmurs that complete
The chants that praise and worship and entreat,
And sweeter still one voice like a star's ray.
All, all too soon are hushed and die away;
Earth's music, as is meet, is fleet,
Sweet.

THE RUDDOCK (ROBIN)

(*Villanelle*)

THE nightingale superbly flows
In ripples and roulades of song ;
A sweeter tune the ruddock knows.

In chants of keenest joys and woes,
Impassioned thrilling under wrong,
The nightingale superbly flows.

The ruddock chirps a tale of prose,
Where homely virtues still belong ;
A sweeter tune the ruddock knows.

No radiant morning sunshine glows
Where hidden well his leaves among
The nightingale superbly flows.

In summer sun, and winter snows,
The ruddock loves the busy throng ;
A sweeter tune the ruddock knows.

A dulcet voice that comes and goes ;
A wholesome note that lingers long ;
The nightingale superbly flows,
A sweeter tune the ruddock knows.

THE FIANCÉE

(*Triolet*)

WITH lavender is laid away
Her raiment in the oaken press ;
The finest lawn and lace array
With lavender is laid away ;
She sits and stitches every day
Until she wears her wedding dress !
With lavender is laid away
Her raiment in the oaken press.

Another treasure-drawer she keeps
To hoard the gifts that are her pride ;
Her thought towards the future leaps ;
Another treasure-drawer she keeps,
And every night before she sleeps
She turns the lock and looks inside ;
Another treasure-drawer she keeps
To hoard the gifts that are her pride.

She wears the dearest of the list,
A ring—two hands that clasp a heart,
Fine twisted gold and amethyst ;
She wears the dearest of the list ;
Methinks it oft is shyly kissed
Whene'er she deems herself apart !
She wears the dearest of the list,
A ring—two hands that clasp a heart.

JARDINET

(*Triolet*)

THE Garden of my Heart
Is full of fragrant flowers.
'Tis walled, and set apart,
The Garden of my Heart,
Its dial, Cupid's dart,
To measure "Sunny Hours."
The Garden of my Heart
Is full of fragrant flowers.

OF KING HENRY VIII.'S SHOES

(1520)

(*Ballade*)

HERE in a case they stand, whom day by day
A mighty Prince directed and controlled ;
Twin types of grandeur, of the proud Array
Adorning figures long since dust and mould.
Could they but speak, what story should be told
Of Knights and banners on the French Pelouse,
Of Rose with Lily blazoned and inscrolled—
You stood for England once, King Henry's Shoes.

Two gallant armies set to joust, not slay ;
Two peaceful Monarchs, enemies of old ;
With splendid offerings and rich display
They meet, in kindness as in battle bold.
No more (they say) be honour bought or sold,
Nor right be wronged, nor law its meaning lose,
Nor hope be bankrupt, charity be cold—
You stood for England once, King Henry's Shoes.

Shoes strangely small, fantastically gay,
Of velvet made, with silver nailed and soled,
Your rouge and argent quaintness seems to say :
" We are the pivot of this Truce extolled ! "

Four hundred years have made men's memories
old—
Not always right did he who wore you choose—
Reformer, lover, headsman—yet behold!
You stood for England, once, King Henry's Shoes.

ENVOY

Heroes, both French and English, can unfold
To-day a tale; can give more glorious news
Than when upon the Field of Cloth of Gold
You stood for England once, King Henry's Shoes.

OF A HAIR RING

(*Ballade*)

A CHESTNUT plait, a pearl-rimmed band—
A Ring, so well for Time prepared
Two centuries its hoop has spanned ;
At whom no alien eyes have stared,
No curio-hunter sought and snared !
Memento of a darling son ;
Engraved within :—" *To God wee spared*
Josiah, ætat. 21."

The Ring upon her slender hand
His mother wore. What other cared
As she ? For time's quick-moving sand
Brings ashes spent and flames out-flared.
Yet still unchanged and unrepaired
His pearls gleam lustrous in the sun ;
To-day *I* keep them white and aired,
Josiah, ætat. 21.

If but Time's glass at my command
Those bygone years returned unscared,
By young Josiah I would stand,
His work, his sports have gladly shared ;
We two the Manor, shallow-staired,
The alleyed garden, would have run ;
Endearing has the Ring declared
Josiah, ætat. 21 !

ENVOY

You should have dreamed, have wrought, have dared ;
Your day was finished ere begun,
Great-great-grand-uncle, chestnut-haired,
Josiah, ætat. 21.

OF VANITY BAGS

(*Ballade*)

A PLEASING Bag is fitly made
To Fashion's ratified receipt
Of charmeuse, velvet, or brocade,
Of stuffs distinguished and *élite ;*
In style unusual and discreet,
Its weight not heavy and not light,
It should be subtle more than " sweet."
A Bag for Vanity's delight !

Its lining may be silk or *suède,*
(Foulard, or satin hard to beat !)
A lighter or a darker shade
The lining should the Bag repeat ;
Unless a contrast best should greet
The opener's enraptured sight,
To conquer rather than entreat—
A Bag for Vanity's delight !

Its frame of silver, shell-inlaid,
Of ivory—their charms compete—
Or ribbons of the highest grade
(But dark for service in the street !)
Its make of fold or gauge or pleat,
Its shape can follow fancy's flight,
Success is *not* an easy feat !
A Bag for Vanity's delight.

ENVOY

Princess, before whose pretty feet
Uncounted tributes lie by right,
Will this your kind approval meet—
A Bag for Vanity's delight ?

OF AN ELIZABETHAN HALF-SOVEREIGN

(*Ballade*)

BEHOLD her here, her brow, her lips,
The mouth that shows the Tudor strain ;
Words issued thence that stung like whips
The wretch who pulled the Lion's mane !
Within some treasure-box has lain
This golden token wrapped in lint
Till fortune drew it forth again,
A coin from Gloriana's Mint.

These are the eyes that watched her ships
Sail South to meet the keels of Spain ;
Who saw Don Philip's sun eclipse,
His wrecked Armada strew the main.
Here the one head that could sustain
Her England's honour free from dint ;
A woman's heart, a statesman's brain—
A coin from Gloriana's Mint.

Beshrew the tales of cranks and quips,
Of vanities that please the vain.
What though in furbelows she trips
Who set sweet Spenser's verse in train ?
She cared no jot for any swain,
Her heart bore England's true imprint,
For England's love alone was fain.
(A coin from Gloriana's Mint.)

ENVOY

Elizabeth, A Queen ingrain—
Thus would her sovrain likeness hint,
This token of a matchless reign,
A coin from Gloriana's Mint.

OF A SPANISH COMB

(*Ballade*)

THE Spanish Lady holds the floor
For dignity and charm and grace;
A Goddess might her walk adore,
Her speaking eyes, her oval face;
Her head-dress of a shawl of lace
No other maid befits so well—
She wears to keep its folds in place
A Comb of carven Tortoiseshell.

The Spanish Country owns a store
Of products fostered by the race—
The Bull-fight and the matador—
(And oranges and soap and mace);
Grant the Alhambra's pride of place,
Murillo and Velazquez' spell,
Yet pause to study for a space
A Comb of carven Tortoiseshell.

The Spanish Lady knows a score
Of pretty wiles that men abase;
If they would keep their gloomy lore
Misogynists themselves must brace.
However slow the heart of pace
'Twill leap and quicken and rebel
When raven ringlets interlace
A Comb of carven Tortoiseshell.

ENVOY

(Infanta, spread your fan in case
Too long admiring glances dwell;
Discreetest fancy can embrace
A Comb of carven Tortoiseshell!)

OF THE SEA-SERPENT

(*Ballade*)

A MAN may wander far and wide
In hopes of prodigy and freak ;
Investigate the country-side,
Explore the rivers creek by creek ;
The further oceans he may seek
Where behemoth and sword-fish flock—
More honoured, notable and sleek,
The old Sea-Serpent's famous stock.

He may discover facts denied
To many a scientific clique ;
Of fur and feather, claw and hide,
Be amply qualified to speak ;
He may have watched where Greek meets Greek
Where Dragons clash in battle shock—
There still exists to make him meek
The old Sea-Serpent's famous stock.

To him it may be cut and dried
That Unicorns their vengeance wreak,
That Basilisks on earth abide,
That Hydras growl, and Wyverns shriek ;
He may have heard the Kraken creak,
The Centaur at the Sphinx make mock,
But has he seen on billows bleak
The old Sea-Serpent's famous stock ?

ENVOY

The Phœnix with his calcined beak,
The Griffin, Cockatrice, and Roc
With envy view that breed unique
The old Sea-Serpent's famous stock.

THE SCARAB

(*Pantoum*)

A SCARAB amulet
Now on a girl's young breast—
Love, ages old, thrills yet
So royally at rest.

Now on a girl's young breast ;
Once did it guard a king's
So royally at rest
Beneath its azure wings.

Once did it guard a king's.
(A queen's to-day, indeed !)
Beneath its azure wings
A writing Sages read.

A queen's to-day, indeed ;
A Queen the message framed ;
A writing (Sages read)
Still living, still untamed.

A Queen the message framed :—
" I, widowed Karāmā,
Still living, still untamed ;
I wait, *Beloved of Rā.*"

" I, widowed Karāmā,
Scribe here my wifely word ;
I wait, *Beloved of Rā,*
And pray to join my Lord."

" Scribe here my wifely word "—
A Scarab amulet ;
" And pray to join my Lord."
Love, ages old, thrills yet !

THE FAIRY

(*Pantoum*)

I STROLLED through glades scarce seen
So troubled was my mind ;
(The Fairy-ring was green ;
The Fairy danced behind.)

So troubled was my mind
Counting the ills I bear ;
The Fairy danced behind,
I never knew him there ;

Counting the ills I bear—
One, two, three, four, five, six !
(I never knew *him* there,
With his bag of magic tricks.)

One-two-three-four-five-six—
Six peals of laughter clear !
" With his bag of magic tricks,"
I cried, " A wizard's near ! "

Six peals of laughter clear—
Like clouds my cares depart !
I cried : " A wizard's near ;
He has bewitched my heart."

" Like clouds my cares depart ;
What conjurer so great ?
He has bewitched my heart ;
I can endure my fate."

" What conjurer so great ?
My path is smooth and plain !
I can endure my fate,
I can be glad again."

" My path is smooth and plain "—
(So troubled *was* my mind.)
" I can be glad again."
(The Fairy danced behind !)

THE GORSE

(*Sestina*)

ONE night a Shepherd, on his homeward way
Across the moor, was startled by a cry,
And found upon the outskirts of a wood
A strange wild faun with eyes that shone like gold,
And in his hand a syrinx made from reeds,
Who showed his hoof where lodged a long, sharp thorn.

The shepherd stooped to the resistant thorn
And with a skilful hand drew it away ;
Brought water from the pond amidst the reeds
And bathed the wound, nor caused a single cry,
The while the morning dawned with streaks of gold
That promised glory to the moor and wood.

There came a wondrous change throughout the wood ;
A Vision stirred high elm and lowly thorn,
The tits, the finches in their green and gold
Another song sang in a different way.
Great Pan sat there for mortals to descry,
The King whose sceptre was a pipe of reeds.

The Shepherd gazed, and trembled like the reeds,
Thrilled with the self-same thrill that stirred the wood ;
And, as the God arose, breathed forth the cry :
" Reward, Great Pan, because I drew the thorn."
The God made answer : " Youth, a better way
I pay my debts than gift of earthly gold ;

For wouldst thou gain diviner meed than gold,
Take counsel of the birds, the trees, the reeds ;
Then ask, and praise me as I go my way,
And worship in this temple of my wood."
" Immortal life ! " thus urged the elm, the thorn,
The reeds thin flute and every bird his cry.

" Gold, gold ! " alas, the Shepherd's urgent cry,
His greedy heart aspired to nought but gold :
" Fill me the moor with gold, for every thorn
A golden coin ! " He heeded not the reeds,
Nor heard the premonition of the wood,
Nor bent in honour of the God's foot-way.

He sped away, then rose a bitter cry :—
" The Gorse has bloomed, O wood, with flower of gold.
Is *this*, O reeds, the guerdon for Pan's Thorn ? "

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